Research Paper

Exploring the components of teachers' educational skills

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Abstract

Aim: This study aimed to identify the manifest and latent meanings of teaching skills. This phenomenological study was conducted in 2020. The qualitative data were analyzed in MAXQDA 10 via grounded theory theoretical coding. The analysis of the interviews yielded 1395 initial codes that were refined to 648 components, 29 subcategories, and nine skills. The majority of components (n=182) belonged to the communication skills, and the fewest components belonged to the research skill (n=30). Class management and organization (n=89), monitoring and evaluation (n=70), using technology and tools (n=62), personal (n=48), planning (n=39), and creativity skills (n=30) were also identified.

Keywords: Grounded theory; Teacher; Educational skill

Introduction

The professional competencies of teachers in the third millennium include skills and knowledge that help them achieve specific outcomes with specific inputs. Exploring these competencies ensures the expected outputs and the accuracy of the teaching process (Ahmadi, Amini Zarrin, & Mahdizad Tehrani, 2016). There are numerous deficiencies in teachers'

teaching methods. Most teachers have trouble with some basic teaching skills and need training (Daneshpajouh & Farzad, 2016). It is essential to address teacher training programs to promote future teachers' educational skills and resolve the deficiencies. Students at Farhangian University are trained to become teachers who practice teaching skills. Thus, the curriculum developed for these students must largely focus on teaching skills. Sunita, & Mahapatra (2016), Hatami (2004), Mollaeenejad (2012), Marashi (1995), Maleki (2005), and Hosseinian Heidari (2013) provided classifications of teacher skills, but these classifications do not fully cover the subject of the current study. Consequently, a new theoretical framework of teachers' educational skills should be developed for implementation on the teacher training curriculum based on the cultural context and the new goals of education in Iran. The main research question addressed herein was: What are the components of educational skills according to student-teachers, eminent teachers, and professors of Farhangian University?

Method

This study aimed to identify the components of teachers' educational skills. This phenomenological study was conducted in 2020 in the Shahid Beheshti branch of Farhangian University (Eghlid, Iran). The potential participants, professors, and experienced teachers were selected via combined purposive sampling (typical case and snowball sampling), and senior student-teachers were selected via extreme case sampling based on the highest GPA. The data were collected via multiple semi-structured interviews. The interview guide was developed based on the skills mentioned in the literature. Sampling reached saturation with 14 senior student-teachers, six university professors, and ten experienced teachers (six heads of educational groups in Fars Province, and four eminent teachers in the province). The qualitative data were analyzed in MAXQDA 10 via grounded theory theoretical coding. The data analysis began with open coding. Then, axial coding was performed wherein the subcategories attained from open coding were categorized in an inductive process. The final step was selective coding, in which the relationships among the categories were aggregated and elucidated, and the categories were put together to present a theory or model (Lee, 2001). The validity of the qualitative data was ensured through member check and triangulation (three groups of Farhangian University professors, teachers, and students-teachers).

Results

The analysis of the interviews in MAXQDA yielded 1395 initial codes that were refined to 648 components, 29 subcategories, and nine skills.

Table1. The number of open codes, subcategories, axial and selective codes

Selective code	Axial code	The number of subcategories	The number of open codes
Educational skills	Communication skills	7	182
	Class management and organization skill	5	93
	Effective teaching skill	4	89
	Monitoring and evaluation skill	2	70
	The skill of using technology and tools	2	62
	The teacher's personal skills	4	48
	Planning skill	2	39
	Creativity skill	2	35
	Research skill	1	30
	Total	29	648

Based on the findings, communication skills were the most important teacher skills. This skill had the largest number of open codes (n = 182) extracted from the interviews. Class management and organization comprised 93 open codes and five subcategories. Effective teaching consisted of 89 open codes and four subcategories. Monitoring and evaluation comprised 70 open codes and two subcategories. Using technology and tools consisted of 62 open codes and two subcategories. The teacher's personal skills involved 48 open codes and four subcategories. Planning comprised 39 open codes and two subcategories. Creativity had 35 open codes and two subcategories. Finally, the research skill had 30 open codes.

Discussion and conclusion

The following conceptual model was designed based on the results:
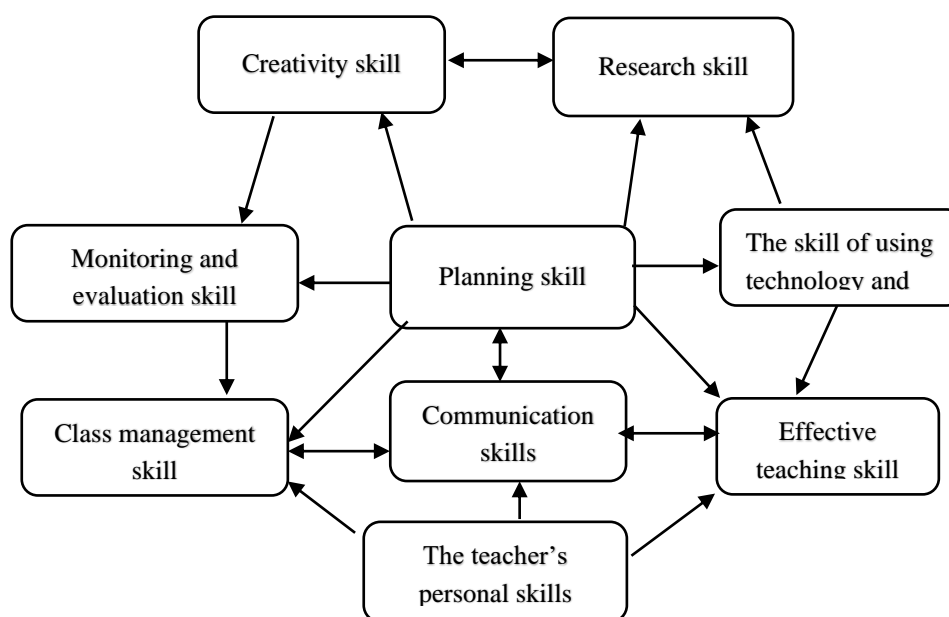
The nine skills and the relationships among them are depicted in this conceptual map. Personal skills, communication skills, class management and organization, using technology and tools, teaching, planning, creativity, and research skills were identified as the fundamental teacher skills. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented access to the participants in person and, thus, it was impossible to collect data from different groups, which is the main limitation of this study. Authorities of the Department of Education and Farhangian University should pay more attention to communication, creativity, and planning skills in the curriculum of Farhangian University and offer courses on these subjects. More attention should be paid to the personality of student-teachers in the recruitment process, and certain indicators and frameworks should be in place for this purpose. Farhangian University should be equipped with novel technologies and effective tools for teaching, and in-service skill-centered workshops and discussions should be held for the teachers.

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